

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 034497

LIMDIS

FOL RPT NEW DELHI 2215 ACTION SECSTATE INFO WHITE HOUSE
USUN NY CIA WASHDC 15 FEB QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 2215

LIMDIS

DEPARTMENT PASS SENATOR PERCY'S OFFICE FOR MRS. JACOBSEN

DEPARTMENT PASS SECRETARY (ENROUTE)

USUN FOR YOUNG

CIA FOR TURNER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN, US

SUBJECT: SENATOR PERCY'S CONVERSATIONS WITH PRIME MINISTER GANDHI

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PAGE 02 STATE 034497

1. SENATOR CHARLES PERCY, WHO WAS IN DELHI AS PART OF THE
DELEGATION TO ATTEND THE FUNERAL OF THE LATE PRESIDENT, HAD AN
HOUR LONG CONVERSATION WITH PRIME MINISTER GANDHI FEBRUARY 14
ACCOMPANIED BY MRS. PERCY, ALSO A LONG-TIME FRIEND.

FOLLOWING ARE THE MAIN POINTS.

2. THE EMERGENCY: MRS. GANDHI SAID THAT THE MAIN ACHIEVEMENT OF HER ADMINISTRATION WAS THE IMPROVEMENT IN NATIONAL UNITY AND CITED THE BRINGING OF THE STATES OF THE NORTHEAST MORE INTO THE MAINSTREAM OF THE COUNTRY. SHE SAID THAT THERE WAS NOW A SENSE OF CONFIDENCE AND STRENGTH. ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL REASONS FOR CALLING THE EMERGENCY WAS THAT FOR SEVERAL YEARS BEFORE JUNE 1975 THERE WAS A SENSE OF DEMORALIZATION THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. YOUTH WERE LEAVING AND EVERYONE WAS TRYING TO TAKE WHAT HE COULD; SMUGGLING WAS RAMPANT. ALL THIS HAS COME TO AN END. FOR ALL PURPOSES EXCEPT TWO THE EMERGENCY HAS BEEN LIFTED: ECONOMIC CRIMINALS CONTINUE TO BE DEALT WITH UNDER THE SPECIAL PROVISIONS OF THE EMERGENCY BECAUSE OF THE PROBLEMS OF THE LEGAL SYSTEM, AND TWO ORGANIZATIONS ARE STILL BANNED. ASKED WHAT PROBLEMS ENSUED FROM THE EMERGENCY SITUATION, MRS. GANDHI NOTED THE ENHANCED POWER OF THE POLICE AND BUREAUCRACY AND SAID THAT SHE HAS BEEN DILIGENTLY WORKING TO PREVENT ABUSES. MRS. GANDHI REPEATEDLY SAID THAT SHE WAS NOT CONCERNED ABOUT THE ELECTIONS PER SE BUT RATHER THE BEHAVIOR OF THE OPPOSITION PARTIES AFTER ELECTIONS. "THE GENIE HAD NOW BEEN LET OUT OF THE BOTTLE". THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS PARTY WHO DID NOT GET TICKETS FOR PARLIAMENT. SHE NOTED THAT WILD RUMORS WERE BEING CIRCULATED TO DISCREDIT HER GOVT AND CITED THE STORY THAT CHILDREN WERE BEING STERILIZED BY BEING GIVEN INJECTIONS. PROFESSOR P.N. DHAR, THE PRIME MINISTER'S SENIOR ADVISOR WHO WAS PRESENT, SUGGESTED THAT SENATOR PERCY READ THE ECONOMIC PROGRAM OF THE JANATA PARTY. HE SAID IT WAS AN ABSURD PROGRAM AND WOULD DEMONSTRATE WHAT A HODGE-PODGE THE PARTY WAS.

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PAGE 03 STATE 034497

3. FOREIGN AFFAIRS: MRS. GANDHI DESCRIBED INDIA'S IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN AND CHINA AS A "MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH". THE SOVIETS UNDERSTOOD THAT INDIA'S IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS WITH CHINA WAS NOT AT THEIR EXPENSE. SIMILARLY, MRS. GANDHI SAID THAT US-INDIA RELATIONS DID NOT AFFECT INDIA'S RELATIONS WITH OTHERS SUCH AS THE SOVIETS. IN THIS CONTEXT, MRS. GANDHI SAID THAT SHE HAD PROBLEMS WITH THE CPI AND IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION SAID THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT TO TELL TO WHAT EXTENT THE CPI WAS CONTROLLED BY THE USSR. ASKED ABOUT PAKISTAN'S DEVELOPMENT OF A NUCLEAR CAPABILITY, MRS. GANDHI ANSWERED, "HOW FAR ALONG ARE THEY?" AND LEFT THE MATTER AT THAT. SENATOR PERCY RAISED THE QUESTION OF THE CIA AND ASSURED MRS. GANDHI THAT HE HAD RECEIVED ASSURANCES FROM THE HIGHEST AUTHORITIES THAT THERE WAS NO CIA INTERVENTION IN INDIA.

4. SENATOR PERCY EXPLAINED PRESIDENT CARTER'S POLICY OF HAVING THE USG SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THAT THERE SHOULD BE HARMONY BETWEEN THE CONGRESS AND THE EXECUTIVE,

SOMETHING WHICH HAD BEEN LACKING PREVIOUSLY. THE SENATOR EXPLAINED THAT THE PRESIDENT HAD MET AT LENGTH WITH THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE. THE SENATOR ASSURED THE PRIME MINISTER THAT THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NO TILT IN US POLICY TOWARD THE SUB-CONTINENT.

5. IN CLOSING, MRS. GANDHI EXPRESSED PLEASURE WITH THE ELECTION OF PRESIDENT CARTER AND APPRECIATION FOR THE DELEGATION WHICH HE SENT TO ATTEND THE LATE RESIDENT'S FUNERAL. SHE ALSO APPRECIATED THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT PUBLISHED IN FEBRUARY 14 INDIAN PRESS, REPORTED SEPTEL.

6. COMMENT: MRS. GANDHI WAS VERY FRIENDLY AND FORTHCOMING IN HER COMMENTS AND THOROUGHLY IN COMMAND. SHE SUFFERS FROM SKIN ERUPTIONS ON HER FACE, AND A TICK IN HER RIGHT EYE WAS NOTED, BUT THESE DID NOT APPEAR TO TROUBLE HER.
END COMMENT.

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PAGE 04 STATE 034497

7. SENATOR AND MRS. PERCY MET PRIVATELY WITH MRS. GANDHI THE PREVIOUS EVENING, FEBRUARY 13. ACCORDING TO THE SENATOR, THE PRIME MINISTER SEEMED MUCH MORE OUTGOING AND FRANK, BUT PESSIMISTIC ABOUT HER OWN POLITICAL SITUATION. SHE WAS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT HER SON SANJAY, MAINTAINING THAT SHE WAS NOT ENVISIONING HIM AS A SUCCESSOR. SHE SAID THAT SHE DID NOT FEEL SHE COULD ACCOMPLISH IT, EVEN IF SHE WISHED.

8. CLEARED BY SENATOR PERCY IN DRAFT.

9. FOR DEPARTMENT: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE Laterally AS APPROPRIATE.
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